

## What is your agreement? A bridge Tip

By Neil H. Timm

With the Corona virus, I finally read the book by Larry Cohen (2018) “Tricks of the Trade” – Strategic Thinking for Advanced Bridge Players. I found the Chapter in the book called “What should we play” very informative.

You meet a new partner and begin to fill out a convention card!

You might hear the discussion going something like this:

“1NT (15-17) with 4-way transfers?”

“ok.”

“Inverted Minors?”

“Of course.”

“1430 RKCB?”

“Sure.”

“Bergen Raises?”

“Certainly.”

“Weak two bids?”

“Yes with Ogust.”

“Unusual 2NT?”

“ok.”

“Support Doubles?”

“Yes.”

And on it goes! Really what do all these “statements” mean?

How do you super accept a 4-way transfer bid and do you play range-asking bids?

For inverted minors, are they game-forcing or invitational and are they on or off over interference?

Playing 1430, if you have not agreed on a suit do you play Blackwood or the last bid suit, and do you play, the queen ask, the specific king response/number, and specific suit asking (SSA) bids?

Are Bergen raises on or off over interference or over a double – do you play BROMAD?

For Ogust do you play Hand-Suit or Suit-Hand?

Are support doubles applied through 2♥ or 2♠ and are they on or off over interference?

For Unusual 2NT, if the opponents raise the major suit bid to the two level what does the cheapest cue bid of their major imply versus bidding a minor?

Getting the picture? Are you confused? I hope so!

Larry states the following when developing a Convention Card.

1. If a convention has a low frequency, forget it.
2. Does it gain much?
3. Do not add conventions without discussion.
4. Don't take on more than you can handle.

Cohen in his book Page (25) has a detailed example of how simple support doubles are often confused without discussion – it is worth a read.

As you know Eric Rodwell invented Support doubles in 1974 while playing Precision. In his book Eric Rodwell's Bidding Topics (2017) by Baron Barclay, he suggested when they apply.

His short answer: when you and your partner agree that they do!

His recommendations follow:

1. They apply through 2♠ a bid on openers' right.
2. Support doubles only apply when responder has bid 1♥ or 1♠.
3. It does not matter what opener's LHO did.
4. Over 3♣ or higher – what you have agreed: take-out, good, hand, or penalty.

What about support redoubles – requires further discussion!

Rodwell in his same book also discusses inverted minor suit bids!

In short they are off in competition, are forcing for one round, show a limit raise with 10-12 points, and 4+ card support; unless you play criss-cross.

What about Bergen raises?

Bergen raises as first written are used in response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid to show hands with 4+ card trump support and strength as follows:

- 1NT followed by 3♥/3♠ on next round – invitational to game (typically 11-12 high card points) with three-card support
- 2♥/2♠ – weak (7-10 high card points) with three-card support
- 3♣ – weak (typically 7-10 high card points) with four-card support
- 3♦ – a limit raise (typically 11-12 high card points) with four-card support; invitational to game
- 3♥/3♠ – very weak (preemptive, typically less than 7 high card points) and four-card support
- 4♥/4♠ – very weak (preemptive, typically less than 7 high card points) and five-card support

Note the overlap in the ranges and that Jacoby 2NT was not part of the original convention.

For this reason by partnership agreement the ranges have changed over time: 0-6 (weak), 7-9, 10-12 and 13+ =2NT with 4-card support. Finally, splinter bids were added and require 3+card support (some require 4) with 13+ points where all points are “DUMMY” points and **NOT ONLY HCP**.

Again a discussion is recommended. Next what if they X or interfere are the bids on or off; again, agreements are required.

I could go into all the bidding sequences --- but what have we seen? Discussion, discussion, and more discussion are required when completing the convention card.

What is one to do? Apply the “Keep it Short and Simple” (**KISS**) principle.

An overview of completed Convention Cards is available on the site Adventures in Bridge (AiB): [www.advinbridge.com/convention-cards-1](http://www.advinbridge.com/convention-cards-1).

Depending on your Browser, some may have to copy and paste the web address into their Browser and then click on Upgrade Your Bidding System – Adventures in Bridge.

The agreements listed below are what Adventures in Bridge (AiB) have experienced with their students at different points in their development. For each of the following six levels, AiB provides a completed Convention Card.

1. Basic 2/1 Game Forcing (Red) -- Under 100 Master points
2. Intermediate 2/1 Game Forcing (Orange) -- 100-500 Master points
3. Modern 2/1 Game Forcing (Yellow) -- 300-1000 Master points
4. Advanced 2/1 Game Forcing (Green) -- 750-2000 Master points
5. Complex 2/1 Game Forcing (Blue) -- 2000+ Master points
6. Expert 2/1 Game Forcing (Purple) -- 3500+ Master points

Finally, if you play on BBO against the robots, what card is used? It is NOT simple and is called Ginsberg’s Intelligent Bridge-player (GIB) Convention Card and found on the Web:

[www.bridgebase.com/doc/gib\\_system\\_notes.php](http://www.bridgebase.com/doc/gib_system_notes.php)

Good Luck with developing your Convention Card with your new partnership.